OVERVIEW: Protests are a fundamental part of a democracy: they provide an opportunity to have your voice heard and stand up for an issue that you believe in. But protesting is an art in itself! Take notes from Richard Bell’s work, get inspired and create your own protest placard for an issue worth fighting for.

INTRODUCTION

Richard Bell’s *From Little Things, Big Things Grow* (2020) references a number of different protests from around the world, using placards and their recognisable slogans to catch the viewer’s attention. In some form or another, these protests were or are fighting for human rights, either locally and internationally.

The title itself references a song of the same name by singer-songwriters Kev Carmody and Paul Kelly. It tells the story of Vincent Lingiari and the Gurindji strike, or Wave Hill walk-off, a protest for land rights that eventually led to the Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1976. Bell uses the title to draw a link to this important movement, and highlight the impact that protests, rallies and strikes can have.

Looking at Bell’s painting, what placards and slogans do you recognise and what protest movements were they from?

The placards seen above the heads of those marching or rallying in protest are used to share the key messages of a group. Protest placards reduce large issues and ideas into quick and memorable slogans that can capture attention and access audiences from many ages and communities.

YOU WILL NEED:

- writing materials
- recycled cardboard, paper or fabric
- markers or paint

PROCESS:

**Part A**

1. Where do we connect with slogans and shortened visual messages in our everyday life? Discuss with the person next to you where you came across short visual or written messages in the past week. It could be in an app, on the TV, in the news; anywhere really!

2. Look at Richard Bell’s *From Little Things, Big Things Grow* (2020). With your partner, create a word cloud describing your initial response to this work. What do you notice? What do you recognise?

3. What do you know about the protest movements that were recognisable to you? As a class, discuss how the placards in the work are used to share a message in a brief yet powerful way.
Part B

4. Think about a serious issue that affects you, your family, your friends or community.

5. Brainstorm and write down all of the messages and slogans you can think of that relate to this issue. They could be serious or light-hearted, as long as they bring attention to the issue.

6. Choose just one of your slogans and think about how the text may be emphasised with colours and other visual elements.

7. Using recycled cardboard or other material, create a placard by painting or drawing your slogan on a big scale.

8. When everyone in the class has finished, arrange all of the placards together and appreciate them as a group.

REFLECTION:

- Have you ever participated in a protest, rally or similar form of resistance? What was your experience of it? Do you remember seeing any placards or hearing any chants?

- What does protesting accomplish compared to other forms of resistance? List some reasons that communities may protest. Apart from protesting, what are the different ways you could express or share your resistance?

- Using Richard Bell's *From Little Things, Big Things Grow* (2020) as an example, explain how an artist's practice can be a form of active resistance. What has changed in your understanding of protest and an artist's role in it?

- How can placards and images of protests record history?